

The field of diversity has gone beyond even culture and gender. It also recognizes that different age, educational level, family structure, job function, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and values can be useful tools in any workplace. But taking advantage of diverse workforces is not easy. It requires changes, increased tolerance, and even new skills. With changes, such as the increased numbers of minorities and the movement of women in the workplace, organizations need to address issues of diversity in the workplace. What are the challenges and how should the organization approach these challenges?

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Introduction

The field of diversity has expanded beyond culture and gender issues to include different learning and cultural styles and approaches within the workplace. But taking advantage of what it has to offer requires changes, increased tolerance, and even new skills. With changes, such as the increased numbers of minorities and the movement of women into the workplace, organizations need to address issues of diversity.

The world is a very diverse place, with issues of politics, interests and religion coupled with concerns over ethnicity, culture and age. Everyone must deal with these issues. Segregation is neither desirable nor realistic in today's world. At all levels of society, people strive to communicate with one other as effectively as possible. Otherwise, the best of intentions can be misinterpreted to the detriment of all parties in the communication process. For example, "appropriate" behaviors are based on cultural rules. Learning the cultural differences that define what is "right" for men versus women is a first step leading to meaningful inter-gender communication (Essed, P. 1996).

Background

Every decade or so, people focused on the vigor of U.S. business organizations fasten onto a particular word or phrase, generating a wide range of issues (Roosevelt, T. 1996). For a period of time, the buzzword was "hot". These buzzwords are usually found in every article and in daily speech and before long take on a symbolic meaning and serve as a simple verbal code for the complex problem from which they originated. In turn, a situation develops where people begin using these words to refer to the more complex situation, but no one is really sure what it actually means. This type of phenomenon occurred with diversity and verbal shorthand within a multiracial, multicultural, and multiethnic workforce, implying underlying perceptions and biases.

Diversity has become a kind of semantic umbrella that encompasses an assortment of programs and issues emanating from human resource, affirmative action, gender, culture, color, age, religion diversity, understanding differences, and a host of other well-intentioned undertakings. Senior management tends to use the word more generally and often more vaguely; nevertheless, they too are essentially referring to the demographics of their workforce.

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This paper explores diversity from a different perspective, believing that in restricting the word to "diversity" issues alone, we overlook a powerful, versatile idea and a new tool that can significantly contribute too many problems facing the modern organization. In this broader vision, diversity applies not only to an organization's internal concerns but too many other critical areas as well.

What Is Diversity? Can It Be Managed?

"Each person's map of the world is as unique as the person's thumbprint. There are no two people alike. No two people understand the same sentence the same way. . . So in dealing with people, you try not to fit them to your concept of what they should be." (Milton Erickson and www.cde.ca.gov/iasa/diversity.html)

Diversity refers to any combination of items characterized by difference. This may seem simple enough on the surface; however, like many simple notions, the implications are significant. If we are to put it into operation, we must fully understand what it means.

In the broadest sense, the management of diversity is a business reaction to rapid cultural and sociological changes (Karp, H. B., & Sammour, H. Y. 2000). Internally, diversity management means providing a climate where all employees feel that they are valued and contributing to the organization. Externally, it means that organizations are flexible and astute about changes occurring within world markets and changing customer profiles. The truth, however, is that inequalities exist for employees within organizations due to stereotyping and preconceived ideas of race, gender, religious or cultural origins, age, physical or mental limitations, and more (Wentling, R. M., and Palma-Rivas, N. 2000). Racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. cannot be managed away. It is precisely these beliefs that make managing diversity so important and often so difficult in the first place.



The Critical Link between Diversity and Complexity

Diversity contributes to complexity and complexity reflects diversity. The two mirror each other. Complexity is a function of the number of components involved and the degree of variability (Roosevelt, T. 1996). It is about how many different elements have to work with, and how different they are from one another (Roosevelt, T. 1996; www.diversityinc.com). The same can be said organizationally: the larger the organization, the more functions, the more diverse groups represented in your workforce and the greater the differences among them, the greater the diversity. In sum, diversity increases complexity: where complexity becomes pronounced, so does diversity. This link between diversity and complexity is critical to the diversity management process.

Dynamic environments characterized by behavioral complexity, together with the intense need to find new methods for competitive advantage, are forcing organizational leaders and managers to expand their capacity to manage such apparent contradictions. In facilitating that expansion, managing diversity holds profound potential. Those who develop skill at understanding and dealing with diversity will also know how to understand and deal with complexity.

Diversity is not synonymous with differences, but encompasses differences and similarities (Roosevelt, T. 1996; www.diversityinc.com).

Since people are accustomed to thinking of diversity in terms of workforce demographics and equating it with the minority workforce, they tend to think diversity implies possessing qualities that are unique and/or different. Therefore, even when people expand the concept of diversity to include the whole range of strategic issues, they still tend to focus on the differences. But the definition that is put forth here includes not only differences but also similarities. This is a critical distinction. It suggests that managers must make managerial decisions to simultaneously include differences and similarities. Getting at the true nature of diversity (comprising differences and similarities) requires an ability to assume both perspectives simultaneously (Roosevelt, T. 1996).

A manager who sees total quality as a self-contained process, which can benefit the organization, lacks the ability to look at the big picture; where as a manager with a broader perspective sees an overall general business process in which total quality is but one facet. A manager, who simultaneously appreciates total quality and integrates it with other processes, represents the diversity perspective of the collective (all-inclusive) mixture of differences and similarities. There is no right or wrong here, except in the sense that what is happening in the environment may make one approach more "right" given the circumstances. Then another is the driving determinant is what ensures organizational viability. When managers are dealing with diversity, they are focusing on the bigger picture, not just pieces of it.

For example, a manager who is truly coping with racial diversity is not dealing with blacks, whites, or Hispanics, but rather with an all-inclusive perspective. The true meaning of diversity suggests that organizations concerned about racism should include all races; organizations concerned about gender should include both genders (Essed, P. 1996; Roosevelt, T. 1996).

The Component Elements of Diversity

The elements of all-inclusive workforce can consist of people, concrete items, or abstractions. So, an organization reflecting the many ways employees can vary (by race, gender, age, education, sexual orientation, geographic origin, physical ability and intelligence or tenure with the organization), includes multiple dimensions. But consider those organizations struggling to create an environment where various functions (marketing, research, manufacturing, and finance) can do their best work. In that mixture, the components are abstractions known as organizational units or functions. Consider also, the manager who is simultaneously using multiple approaches for improved effectiveness: reengineering, total quality, participatory management, and management by objectives. This manager is dealing with a set of ideas, a diversity of abstract entities. So it is no longer sufficient to say our organization is working on diversity issues in general. The dimensions being addressed must be specified (Essed, P. 1996; Roosevelt, T. 1996).

Thinking in terms of diversity mixtures requires organizations accustomed to seeing diversity as something that relates only to the workforce for expanding their view of what diversity encompasses and the organizational areas to which it relates is no small task. For that reason, only those organizations that make that conceptual leap will be well rewarded. Organizations must begin to learn how to evaluate situations through this complex lens called diversity. Can an organization describe the circumstance in terms of its component parts, parts that are similar in some respects and dissimilar in others?

Gender

In the last decade, the situation of women has moved to the forefront of national and international policy debates. While the last half-century has seen major gains in women's health, education, and rights, progress has been slow or uneven in many areas. Gender inequality or disparities between the roles of men and women is still pronounced in the poorest regions and countries of the world (Essed, P. 1996; Nanda, S. 1999; www.eff.org).

Through the year 2005, the U.S. Labor Department estimates that half of all labor force entrants will be women. In the U.S. alone, dominant identity politics stress immutable gender, race/ethnic, and diversity preference while elevating class; making it difficult to maintain a long historical vision of the shifting intersections of diversity and politics. Many observers have held the identity-based "new social movements" responsible for the decline of organized left politics (www.dol.gov).

Age

The current U.S. workforce is reflecting the changing demographics of our nation in many ways. The working population is aging along with the country. In order to hire and promote the best and brightest and compete globally, companies must manage increasingly diverse employee populations. For a variety of reasons, ranging from economic necessity, personal choice, and critical need, aging Americans, particularly those age 65 and older, are remaining in job market. To maintain a viable workplace for older employees it is essential to address concerns about health care costs, consider investments in training and education, and to adjust to changes in organizational structure (Karp, H. B., and Sammour, H. Y. 2000).

Sexual Orientation

Although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces six statutes prohibiting discrimination in employment, no federal law exists to protect people from being fired, refused work or otherwise discriminated against for being gay, lesbian or bisexual. Nevertheless, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), a lobbying group devoted to issues of fairness for lesbian, bisexual, and gay Americans, notes that equal opportunity in the workplace is a growing part of the landscape for many lesbian and gay Americans (Wentling, R. M. 2001; www.alabanzo.com).

Cultural Diversity

The composition of today's workforce, and that of years to come, is constantly changing. Through the year 2005, the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that a third of all labor force will be people of color, with diverse ethnicities. (www.dol.gov) There are more and more people of different ancestries entering into the workforce. These various people, who make up the "melting pot" of corporate America, are come from distinct backgrounds and have various, biases, habits, attitudes and work styles. The task for managers, and all employees alike, is to learn how to deal with these differences and instill a sense of cultural diversity in the workplace (Mutari, E., Boushey, H., & Fraher, W. 1997; Barak, M. E. M. 2000).

Managing Workplace Diversity

Achieving workplace diversity is a multi-faceted process that continues to evolve as more organizations move forward in a global environment. The belief that every human being is of equal worth, entitled to the same privileges and opportunities, without regard to race, gender, disability or age seems to be increasingly more prevalent. This fundamental belief has led to changes in management practices primarily relating to the recruitment, training, and retention of employees at national and international level who reflect the changing face of the workforce. In order to understand the necessities and benefits of managing workplace diversification, the concept must be fully explored (Barak, M. E. M. 2000).

Managing Diversity is Not Affirmative Action

Affirmative action and the language of equal opportunity came as a political response to the social outcry over the racial and social injustices that limited equal access to the workplace. Unfortunately, one of the problems with affirmative action began to be perceived as a public relations scheme focused more on quotas than individuals. Workplace diversity attempts to ensure that when hired, employees as individual have been selected because of their qualifications and not because of gender or ethnicity. Organizations have moved from a use of words like fairness, inequality, and injustice toward terms such as ethnic diversity, political correctness, and cultural consciousness (Wentling, R. M. 2001). Have we changed our perceptions of the problems of workplace inequality or just the way we describe it? Let's look at the history of affirmative action.

History of Affirmative Action

The following list of affirmative action policies is re-published with permission of Americans for Fair Chance (Last updated, 2002).

1961. President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order (E.O.) 10925 used affirmative action for the first time by instructing federal contractors to take "affirmative action to ensure that applicants are treated equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." Created the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

1964. Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law. This was landmark legislation prohibiting employment discrimination by large employers (over 15 employees), whether or not they have government contracts. Established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

1965. President Lyndon B. Johnson issued E.O. 11246, requiring all government contractors and subcontractors to take affirmative action to expand job opportunities for minorities. Established Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) in the Department of Labor to administer the order.

1967. President Johnson amended E.O. 11246 to include affirmative action for women. Federal contractors now required making good-faith efforts to expand employment opportunities for women and minorities.

1970. The Labor Department, under President Richard M. Nixon, issued Order No.4, authorizing flexible goals and timetables to correct "underutilization" of minorities by federal contractors.

1971. Order No.4 was revised to include women.

1971. President Nixon issued E.O. 11625, directing federal agencies to develop comprehensive plans and specific program goals for a national Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) contracting program.

1973. The Nixon administration issued "Memorandum-Permissible Goals and Timetables in State and Local Government Employment Practices," distinguishing between proper goals and timetables and impermissible quotas.

1978. The U.S. Supreme Court in Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 912 (1978) upheld the use of race as one factor in choosing among qualified applicants for admission. At the same time, it also ruled unlawful the University Medical School's practice of reserving 18 seats in each entering class of 100 for disadvantaged minority students.

1979. President Jimmy Carter issued E.O. 12138, creating a National Women's Business Enterprise Policy and requiring each agency to take affirmative action to support women's business enterprises.

1979. The Supreme Court ruled in *United Steel Workers of America, AFL-CIO v. Weber*, 444 U.S. 889 (1979) that race-conscious affirmative action efforts designed to eliminate a conspicuous racial imbalance in an employer's workforce resulting from past discrimination are permissible if they are temporary and do not violate the rights of white employees.

1983. President Ronald Reagan issued E.O. 12432, which directed each federal agency with substantial procurement or grant making authority to develop a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) development plan.

1985. Efforts by some in the Reagan administration to repeal Executive Order 11246 were thwarted by defenders of affirmative action, including other Reagan administration officials, members of Congress from parties, civil rights organizations and corporate leaders.

1986. The Supreme Court in *Local 128 of the Sheet Metal Workers' International Association v. EEOC*, 478 U.S. 421 (1986) upheld a judicially-ordered 29% minority "membership admission goal" for a union that had intentionally discriminated against minorities, confirming that courts may order race-conscious relief to correct and prevent future discrimination.

1987. The Supreme Court ruled in *Johnson v. Transportation Agency, Santa Clara County, California*, 480 U.S. 616 (1987) that a severe underrepresentation of women and minorities justified the use of race or sex as "one factor" in choosing among qualified candidates.

1989. The Supreme Court in *City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.*, 488 U.S. 469 (1989) struck down Richmond's minority contracting program as unconstitutional, requiring that a state or local affirmative action program be supported by a "compelling interest" and be narrowly tailored to ensure that the program furthers that interest.

1994. In *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, 513 U.S. 1012 (1994) the Supreme Court held that a federal affirmative action program remains constitutional when narrowly tailored to accomplish a compelling government interest such as remedying discrimination.

1995. President Bill Clinton reviewed all affirmative action guidelines by federal agencies and declared his support for affirmative action programs by announcing the Administration's policy of "Mend it, don't end it."

1995. Senator Robert Dole and Representative Charles Canady introduced the so-called Equal Opportunity Act in Congress. The act would prohibit race- or gender-based affirmative action in all federal programs.

1995. The Regents of the University of California voted to end affirmative action programs at all University of California campuses. Beginning in 1997 for graduate schools and 1998 for undergraduate admissions, officials at the University were no longer allowed to use race, gender, ethnicity or national origin as a factor in admissions decisions.

1995. The bipartisan Glass Ceiling Commission released a report on the endurance of barriers that deny women and minorities access to decision-making positions and issued a recommendation "that corporate America use affirmative action as a tool ensuring that all qualified individuals have equal access and opportunity to compete based on ability and merit."

1996. California's Proposition 209 passed by a narrow margin in the November election. Prop. 209 abolished all public-sector affirmative action programs in the state in employment, education and contracting. Clause (C) of Prop. 209 permits gender discrimination that is "reasonably necessary" to the "normal operation" of public education, employment and contracting.

1996. In *Texas v. Hopwood*, 518 U.S. 1033 (1996) the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled against the University of Texas, deciding that its law school's policy of considering race in the admissions process was a violation of the Constitution's equal-protection guarantee. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of the ruling because the program at issue was no longer in use.

1997. Voters in Houston supported affirmative action programs in city contracting and hiring by rejecting an initiative that would banish such efforts. Houston proved that the wording on an initiative is a critical factor in influencing the voters' response. Instead of deceptively focusing attention on "preferential treatment," voters were asked directly if they wanted to "end affirmative action programs." They said no.

1997. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear a challenge to California's Prop. 209. By declining to review the case, the court did not decide the case on its merits but allowed Prop. 209 to go into effect.

1997. The U.S. House Judiciary Committee voted 17-9, on a bipartisan basis, to defeat legislation aimed at dismantling federal affirmative action programs for women and minorities. Representative George Gekas (R-Pa.), who moved to table the bill, said that the bill was "useless and counterproductive. I fear that forcing the issue at this time could jeopardize the daily progress being made in ensuring equality."

1997. Bill Lann Lee was appointed Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights after facing opposition to his confirmation because of his support for affirmative action when he worked for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

1997. Lawsuits were filed against the University of Michigan and the University of Washington School of Law regarding their use of affirmative action policies in admissions standards.

1997. In response to Hopwood, the Texas legislature passed the Texas Ten Percent Plan, which ensures that the top ten percent of students at all high schools in Texas have guaranteed admission to the University of Texas and Texas A&M system, including the two flagships, UT – Austin and A&M College Station.

1998. Both the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate thwarted attempts to eliminate specific affirmative action programs. Both houses rejected amendments to abolish the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program funded through the Transportation Bill, and the House rejected an attempt to eliminate use of affirmative action in admissions in higher education programs funded through the Higher Education Act.

1998. Ban on use of affirmative action in admissions at the University of California went into effect. UC Berkeley had a 61% drop in admissions of African American, Latino and Native American students, and UCLA had a 36% decline.

1998. Voters in Washington passed Initiative 200 banning affirmative action in higher education, public contracting, and hiring.

2000. Many Circuit Courts throughout the country heard cases regarding affirmative action in higher education, including the 5th Circuit in Texas (Hopwood), the 6th Circuit in Michigan (Grutter and Gratz), the 9th Circuit in Washington (Smith), and the 11th Circuit in Georgia (Johnson). The same District Court in Michigan made two different rulings regarding affirmative action in Michigan, with one judge deciding that the undergraduate program was constitutional while another judge found the law school program unconstitutional.

2000. The Florida legislature passed "One Florida" Plan, banning affirmative action. The program also included the Talented 20% Plan that guarantees the top 20% admission to the University of Florida system.

2000. In an effort to promote equal pay, the US Department of Labor promulgated new affirmative action regulations including an Equal Opportunity Survey, which requires federal contractors to report hiring, termination, promotions and compensation data by minority status and gender. This is the first time in history that employers have been required to report information regarding compensation by gender and minority status to the federal equal employment agencies.

2000. The 10th Circuit issued an opinion in *Adarand Constructors v. Mineta*, 228 F.3d 1147 (10th Cir. 2000) and ruled that the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise as administered by the Department of Transportation was constitutional because it served a compelling government interest and was narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. The court also analyzed the constitutionality of the program in use when Adarand first filed suit in 1989 and determined that the previous program was unconstitutional. Adarand then petitioned the Supreme Court for a writ of certiorari.

2001. In *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Mineta*, 534 U.S. 103 (2001) the Supreme Court dismissed the case as "improvidently granted", thereby leaving undisturbed the 10th Circuit's decision, which upheld the government's revised federal contracting program.

2001. California enacted a new plan allowing the top 12.5% of high school student's admission to the UC system, either for all four years or after two years outside the system, and guaranteeing the top 4% of all high school seniors' admission into the UC system.

2002. The Sixth Circuit handed down its decision in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 288 F.3d 732 (6th Cir. 2002) on May 14, 2002, and upheld as constitutional the use of race as one of many factors in making admissions decisions at the University of Michigan's Law School. A decision in the companion case involving the undergraduate school at the University of Michigan, *Gratz v. Bollinger*, is imminent.

Nearly every organization currently seeks to achieve a diverse workforce in order to prepare for an increasingly multiracial and multicultural society and globalized work environment. Diversity is usually pursued through proportional representation, backed by a set of policies that attempts to shape the dynamics of the organization and the society.

Beginning in 1961, when for the first time in the context of civil rights, through 2002, the Sixth Circuit court decision has called for Affirmative Action. This term remains as a cornerstone for taking appropriate steps to eliminate practices of discrimination. Affirmative action still divides people in the workplace and but in society in general. Nevertheless, the current workforce of the United States is reflecting the changing demographics of our nation in many ways. To fully understand the issues of affirmative action today, organizations should recognize the historical background surrounding its origination (www.socsci.mcmaster.ca).

Law and Diversity

Diversity training is often initiated as a result of lawsuits or federal mandate as, it affirmative action. Under such circumstances, diversity training typically receives low priority and is limited to those initiatives driven by the law, e.g., sexual harassment policy, accommodation of workers with disabilities, equal employment directives. In reality, diversity is much broader than these issues. It includes differences in age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, values, language, education, lifestyle, beliefs, physical appearance and economic status. "Each of these characteristics can affect an employee's attitudes and behaviors in the workplace as well as influence his or her ability to work well with other employees" (Wentling and Palma-Rivas 2000, p. 36). When dealing with a work force that is increasingly characterized by people of diverse characteristics, everyone's issues must be valued.

Each company has its own diversity-related issues. No one approach or set of standards can be used to establish the focus and content of training. However, some processes have proven to be successful: the use of a needs assessment to determine the specific issues the organization must address; a demonstrated commitment by the organization to diversity issues; and organizational communication about the goals and objectives of its specific diversity program (Wentling 2001). Global organizations may have a different set of objectives than corporations that operate solely within the United States. However, in a service economy, effective interactions and communications between workers and their customers have become essential elements in an organization's success.

Managing Diversity Programs

When an organization launches or is considering launching a diversity initiative, it knows that the course ahead is into uncharted waters. A successful program compels management to question old assumptions, requires individuals to take a hard look at very personal issues, and demands profound changes throughout the organization.

Creating a workplace that is more inclusive, more humane, and more productive will not happen overnight. Organizations must recognize that along the way, they must expect to meet resistance. So, leaders and managers should carefully listen for impassioned complaints and feel the emotional turmoil of employees locked in old prejudices and misunderstandings (Ricucci, N. M. 1997).

The challenge of creating a high performing organization without oppression requires much more than consideration of what may have worked or works for others. It requires careful thought and understanding of what hasn't worked and why. Only after analyzing the worst practices will an organization be able to formulate a strategy that responds to and reflects the specific requirement.

Diversity Situations

Consider the following circumstances, any one of which, if mismanaged, can bring even the strongest company to near ruin.

Workforce Diversity - Today, managers are facing the most diverse workforce ever. Women, minorities, and immigrants are growing in number and playing increasingly important roles; yet managers struggle continually to find vehicles to ensure full use of these employees' potentials.

Teaming - Many organizations are turning to teaming as a strategic structure. Transforming a group of people from different functions and other significant variations into a cohesive, focused unit can be an imposing challenge.

Globalization - As opportunities abroad present themselves, managers must deal with more and more complexity across a wide variety of national situations. This complexity stretches traditional perspectives and structures.

Acquisitions and Mergers - American corporations appear to alternate between periods of inclination toward acquisitions and mergers and celebrating the advantages of variety and emphasis on associations sticking to basic business. They move back and forth between strategies of acquisitions and divestitures, so much so that some managers are now gun-shy and confused.

Work and Family - In all kinds of organizations, managers are being asked to accommodate a wider variety of employees' expectations about balance between work and family. In spite of much attention and some progress, the growing consensus is that movement has been too slow.

Cross-functional Coordination - Achieving effective collaboration between functions while pushing for excellence in all functions is one of the most difficult of all managerial challenges. Although, much time and attention have been devoted to cross-functional coordination, it does not appear for getting any easier.

Managing Change - Managers who take on the role of change agents find themselves forcing complex and dynamic environments that demand equally dynamic and complex adaptation. They often encounter resistance from colleagues who have difficulty accepting and understanding this complexity. For example: change agents, by definition, present cutting-edge ideas that often have not been quantified. Often their ideas are met with unanswerable questions like these: Do you have numbers to support your propositions? Can you prove what you are recommending will work? (Roosevelt, T. 1996).

Diversity Management Process

Work place issues surrounding race, ethnicity, language, sexuality, and religion often originate from hurtful stereotypes. To help managers explore strategies, it is necessary to delve into the heart of the diversity management process. Once a manager has figured out the essence of the problem, the task is to review four standard steps and choose one (or more) that seems to offer the best resolution. In sum, then, the Diversity Management process consists of these steps:

1. Analyze the circumstances and identify the problem.
2. Identify the diversity mixture at hand; define its ingredients.
3. Determine whether diversity tension is present and, if so, whether it is interfering with success.
4. Review the action options and choose one or more to implement.

This process is versatile enough to apply to a variety of diversity concerns. Once managers have mastered the use of this tool, they can quickly apply it to other situations. (Roosevelt, T. 1996; Riccuci, N. M. 1997).

Step 1: Get clear on the problem

The first step in solving a problem is to identify the cause of conflict. Analyze the situation. What changes are occurring within the organization what is the significance? What is required to succeed in terms of organizational mission, and what is interfering with the achievement of success? Being able to see clearly without prejudgments or personal bias is an important skill for managers.

Step 2: Analyze the diversity mixture

The next step is to analyze the circumstances of concern to the organization. The goal is to be able to define the situation in terms of diversity and to identify the elements at hand. This may be a new concept for many organizations. It may be useful to think back to the situations, cross-functional coordination, globalization, and review the elements of their mixtures.

Step 3: Check for diversity tension

Determine whether diversity tension is present and, if so, whether it is interfering with success. The Organization must ask two questions: is it seeing tension here as a result of this diversity mixture? And if so, does it need to do anything about it? Diversity tension causes conflict, stress, and strain associated with the interactions of the elements in the mixture. Tension often accompanies a diversity mixture. Diversity tension is usually easy to spot, and it may take different forms, or show itself in varying degrees. Nevertheless, generally it is easily recognized. The real question is does it require attention? (Roosevelt, T. 1996).

Step 4: Review action options

The task at this point is to dispassionately review what is currently being done to address your primary problems and to decide how well that approach is working. Quickly evaluate what works and what does not. If it is not working, it is likely that tension level is higher. It is time to try something else.

Table 1 - The Diversity Action Options (www.jalmc.org)

Option	Description
Include/exclude	Include by expanding the number and variability of mixture components. Or exclude by minimizing the number and variability of mixture components.
Deny	Minimize mixture diversity by explaining it away.
Assimilate	Minimize mixture diversity by insisting the "minority" conform to the norms of the dominant factor.
Suppress	Minimize mixture diversity by removing it from your consciousness - by assigning it to the subconscious.
Isolate	Address diversity by including and setting "different" mixture components off to the side.
Tolerate	Address diversity by fostering a room-for-all attitude, albeit with limited superficial interactions among the mixture components.
Build relationships	Address diversity by fostering quality relationships - characterized by acceptance and understanding - among the components.
Foster mutual adaptation	Address diversity by fostering mutual adaptation in which all components change somewhat for the sake of achieving common objectives.

Where Are We Today

According to a survey conducted by the Business-Higher Education Forum and the National Alliance of Business, 81 percent of adults believe it is important to have employees of difference races, cultures and backgrounds in the workplace. Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents say businesses should be allowed to take actions to ensure that their work forces are diverse.

The Hudson Institute, a public-policy research organization, reports that nearly three-quarters of projected population growth in the United States between 1999 and 2020 will come from African Americans, Asians and Hispanics. This increase is most notable among Hispanics, who will account for 40 percent of the projected growth. To have a multicultural work force means being able to bridge the gap between mere acceptance and a true understanding of others beliefs. Every society has a unique culture. There are many benefits to having a diverse work force, and some problems (Wentling, R. M., and Palma-Rivas, N. 2000).

The Future

All in all, the workplace will continue to become more diverse as it continues to expand. Ultimately, employers will have to come to grips with the greater focus on diversity. Meeting this challenge has its rewards for both employers and employees. Being able to work in a diverse environment not only makes individuals better employees but better people as well. (www.cob.ohio-state.edu/~fiversity). The rapid pace of change in technology, society and demographics require that we re-examine the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to survive and succeed in the 21st century (www.alabanzo.com/kabacoff/Inter-Linls/diversity.html).

Conclusion

Recent studies confirm that many organizations are considering, planning, developing, and implementing a variety of diversity initiatives. Although some organizations may have less sophisticated programs, they are striving for increased productivity of workers, the ability to respond to diverse environment, and an enhanced ability to be competitive forces in the marketplace (Mutari, E., Boushey, H., & Fraher, W. 1997). Many organizations have stated that ethical concerns and humanitarianism are the incentives that motivate them to offer diversity training and implement such program; others tied their efforts to initiatives supported by law. The one common incentive shared by all organizations is the realization of economic reward for their efforts. Diversity training helps organizations be productive and compete successfully in this global environment. In turn employers and employees reap economic rewards. When diversity training programs lead to collaboration, cooperation, and respect among workers, employers and employees reap emotional rewards (Essed, P. 1996).

However, people need to see the benefits of change before they give their unconditional support to a program. They need to feel that they are part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Diversity programs can inspire this type of commitment by involving workers in the planning process; setting guidelines for appropriate behavior. Diversity training and programs are more likely to be successful when it is part of a strategic process to which management is committed and involves ongoing assessment and modification as an organization's needs change (Wentling, 2001).

Diversity consciousness cannot be simply mandated into a system, integrated into an organizational culture, or prompted by financial incentives. It is reflective of an attitude that organizations and their staffs must adopt that allows them to change their basic concepts about workers and converts "them" into "us". In short, we need a new understanding of diversity and changing our sense of what something means is never easy.

About C4SEM

The Center for Security and Emergency Management (C4SEM) was established to enhance the capabilities of military security forces, law enforcement officers, emergency responders and local officials to prepare for, respond to, and recover from catastrophic events resulting from natural events, man-made accidents, or terrorist attacks. Since its inception, C4SEM has provided military, federal, state and local departments and agencies with high-quality, hands-on, scenario-driven training, exercises, technical assistance, and strategy development.

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- Identify Terrorists Communications and Operations Capabilities
- Identify Indicators Pertaining to Terrorist Actions
- Develop Security and Emergency Management Strategies

Define Mission, Clear Objective, Creative Solution